MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
CASS COUNTY JOINT WATER RESOURCE DISTRICT
GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE CENTER
CASSELTON, NORTH DAKOTA
JANUARY 6, 2016

The Cass County Joint Water Resource District met on Wednesday, January 6, 2016, at 8:30 a.m. at the Governors' Conference Center, Casselton, North Dakota.

Present were Dan Jacobson, Southeast Cass Water Resource District; Jurgen Suhr and Gerald Melvin, Maple River Water Resource District; Ken Lougheed; North Cass Water Resource District; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Secretary-Treasurer; Michelle Anderson, Administrative Assistant; Mike Opat and Josh Hassell, Engineers for the Board; Pat Downs, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Shanna Braun, Barr Engineering Company; Randy Gjestvang, Red River Retention Authority and State Water Commission; Pat McQueary and Patsy Crooke, Corps of Engineers; Gary A. Lee, North Dakota State Senator; Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commissioner; Jason Benson, Cass County Engineer; and those whose names appear on the attached roster.

Swan Creek Watershed

Mike Opat welcomed everyone and introduced the Maple River Water Resource District board members and staff, Swan Creek Watershed Planning Team (Team), advisory and partner agency representatives, and consultants in attendance. Mr. Opat stated the Cass County Joint Water Resource District is the sponsoring local organization and said the purpose of the meeting is to gain input from those in the Swan Creek Watershed to help develop flood damage reduction projects.

Pat Downs gave a presentation and explained the Swan Creek Watershed is located within the Maple River Water Resource District in Cass County and has experienced repetitive flooding, including 6 historic floods in the past 14 years. Numerous pictures were shown of the effects overland flooding has had on transportation in rural areas, making roads impassable at times, washing out roads and bridges, stranding homeowners, delayed planting, crop loss, field erosion and stream bank erosion.

The Cass County Highway Department spent a total of approximately $10 Million on road and bridge repairs from 2009 through 2011, due to flooding. Specific damage areas were demonstrated on the 2009-2011 Bridge/Road Data map for Swan Creek Watershed. Mr. Downs provided a brief review of damage areas and comments submitted through the public meetings held in April and June of 2014, but stated all options are now open for discussion.

The Swan Creek Watershed Planning Team will be following the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) planning process to develop potential flood risk reduction

measures in the watershed. Funding will be available through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program to assist with the cost of the Small Watershed Planning Process (PL-566).

Mr. Downs briefly reviewed the role of the Team meetings. The first step in the planning process is to establish a purpose and need for watershed planning solutions within the Swan Creek Watershed. Mr. Downs presented and reviewed the NRCS concerns. A *Public Comment Form* was distributed for property owners and communities to rank concerns and list watershed goals. Mr. Downs explained the critical need for those living in the Swan Creek Watershed to list and rank their concerns for potential flood risk reduction measures. The concerns and comments will be reviewed by the Team to help establish the purpose and need for potential action.

Patsy Crooke briefly explained the Corps of Engineers is a cooperating agency. Mr. Downs explained as potential solutions are narrowed down, the agencies may address specific concerns on specific areas within the watersheds.

A draft purpose and need statement was presented to initiate ideas for possible considerations and potential goals in the Swan Creek Watershed. A few of the objectives included:

- Reducing flood impacts to roads, bridges, and culverts;
- Reducing agricultural crop losses, field erosion, and delayed planting;
- The ability to implement, manage and accomplish a project;
- Improving infiltration rates on land; and
- Reducing the 100-year flood impact.

Once established, the purpose and need statement will be submitted to the NRCS. Public meetings will be held at the end of 2017 or early 2018. Team meetings will continue and reports will be given at monthly Cass County Water Resource District meetings. Mr. Downs encouraged anyone interested to sign-up on the Cass County website to receive meeting notices and updates. A draft of the final watershed plan will be submitted to the NRCS by 2018.

Mr. Downs and Mr. Opat thanked everyone for their participation and asked that concerns and watershed goals be ranked on the forms and submitted within a week. Mr. Opat stated it is important concerns and issues are expressed at the beginning of the project development timeline. Comments will be reviewed by the Team at its next meeting.

A comment was made on the positive impact of farmers installing drain tile to reduce flood damage to fields and help prevent crop loss. The property owner stated a company in the area conducted a drain tile study to measure water quality and the impact downstream. Mr. Downs stated drain tile has been utilized and put into many fields, but the decision to use drain tile is left to the individual property owner.

Harvey Morken stated he is on the Team and anyone can share concerns, ideas, and information with him. He explained those living within the Swan Creek Watershed need to submit their concerns and goals, otherwise the solutions will be those of the planning team and vital flood damage reduction solutions could be missed.

For reference and to initiate discussion, Mr. Opat once again presented the Swan Creek Watershed 2009-2011 Bridge/Road Data map showing specific damage areas. Mr. Downs stated the maps handed out can be marked up and used to show individual property or community concerns along with the *Public Comment Form*.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Board, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

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Mark Brodshaug
Chairman

ATTEST:

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Carol Harbeke Lewis
Secretary-Treasurer